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ARMENIA

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I. LAND AND PEOPLE

1. The Republic of Armenia is a land-locked, mountainous country located in the Trans-Caucasus region. The smallest republic of the former USSR, Armenia covers an area of 29,800 sq.km (11,490 sq.miles). It is bordered on the north by Georgia, on the east by Azerbaijan, on the south by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and on the west by Turkey. Its terrain is predominantly mountainous with limited arable land. Its climate is diverse, ranging from dry subtropical to cold mountain weather. Its major city and capital is Yerevan with a population of 1.3 million persons, roughly 30 per cent of Armenia's population.

2. The population of Armenia as of 1 January 1993 was 3,722,300. During the late 1980s the population was rising by only 0.8 per cent, reflecting a relatively low rate of natural increase (1.5 per cent and, most importantly, a net migration out of Armenia. As a result of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh, thousands of Armenians fled Azerbaijan into Armenia, contributing to a population increase of some 157,000. There is also a substantial Armenian diaspora, estimated at around 4 million, living mainly in the United States, France, Argentina, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon, Russia and other former Soviet republics.

3. Thirty per cent of the population is under 15 years of age, while 6.8 per cent is older than 65 years (1993).

4. The entire population can be broken down into the following categories:

Age	Total	Male	Female
0- 4	373 561	192 188	181 373
5- 9	393 308	201 440	191 868
10-14	349 253	178 801	170 452
15-19	310 293	157 761	152 532
20-24	285 362	145 491	139 871
25-29	303 434	145 457	157 977
30-34	346 863	165 233	181 630
35-39	285 757	133 826	151 931
40-44	211 232	99 000	112 232
45-49	122 785	57 020	65 765
50-54	165 293	76 657	88 636
55-59	166 770	77 323	89 447
60-64	159 365	73 819	85 546
65-69	119 077	54 800	66 277
70-74	47 651	17 450	30 201
75-79	36 115	12 441	23 674
80-84	28 151	9 492	18 659
85+	18 030	6 318	11 712

These figures do not include a large number of Armenians, estimated at around half a million, who left Armenia because of the economic and social conditions caused by the Azerbaijani and Turkish blockade. Most of these persons left the country temporarily and are expected to come back when the conflict between Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan is resolved.

5. The Republic of Armenia has a homogeneous population with very few minorities. The numbers as of 1989 were the following:

	Total population	% who speak their maternal language	Second language spoken by (%)		
			Arm.	Russ.	Other
Total:	3 304.8	99.1	1.9	42.2	0.6
Armen.	3 083.6	99.7	-	44.3	0.5
Azerb.	84.9	99.7	6.5	19.1	0.1
Russians	51.6	98.4	32.2	-	3.1
Kurds and Yezidis	4.2 51.9	79.7	57.8	6.5	3.1
Ukrainians	8.3	68.1	21.8	47.8	8.6
Assyrians	6.0	90.0	28.1	51.8	1.2
Greeks	4.6	58.4	41.9	35.8	2.9
Others	9.7	74.4	21.6	47.4	4.6

6. This figure includes the 77,000 Azerbaijanis who left Armenia for Azerbaijan. These Azerbaijanis are regarded by the Government as only having temporarily left Armenia. At present there are 7,900 Azerbaijanis living in Armenia.

7. The official State language of Armenia is Armenian. Armenian is the only modern representative of a distinct branch of the Indo-European language family with its own 38-character alphabet created in the fifth century A.D.

8. Armenians are mainly Christian, belonging to the Armenian Gregorian or Armenian Apostolic Church. Armenia is recognized as the first nation to adopt Christianity as a State religion, in 301 A.D. Since the Middle Ages, Armenians have also adhered to Catholicism, and later Protestantism. There are a few Muslim Armenians.

9. The average life expectancy of the population of Armenia is 72.17 years (in 1992).

Year	Entire population	Male	Female
1987	73.9	71.0	76.0
1988*	62.3	61.6	62.4
1989	70.4	67.9	73.4
1990	70.7	67.4	73.3

* The sudden decrease in life expectancy reflects the effects of the earthquake which struck northern Armenia on 7 December 1988 and claimed the lives of at least 25,000 persons.

10. Following are additional relevant demographic statistics:

Population growth:	1.23 per cent (1993 estimate)
Birth rate:	25.79/1 000 (1993 estimate)
Death rate:	6.77 deaths/1 000 (1993)

II. POLITICAL STRUCTURE

History

11. Armenia's history dates to the sixth century B.C. The Armenian State reached its zenith during the first century B.C., under the rule of King Tigranes, known to Armenians as Tigran the Great.

12. During the Middle Ages, Armenia was divided between the Roman and Persian empires, while during the seventh to ninth centuries it fell under the domination of the Arab Caliphate. During the eleventh century A.D., as a result of Seljuk invasions, and the anti-Armenian policies pursued by Byzantium, the Armenian State ceased to exist. In the eleventh century an Armenian State was established on the north-eastern shore of the Mediterranean - the kingdom of Cilicia - which lasted until the end of the fourteenth century. In the sixteenth century Armenia was divided between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia, and subjected to forced assimilation and massive repression. From the seventeenth century onwards, Armenia attracted the attention of Russia, and became part of its Caucasian agenda. The watershed event during this period was the war of 1827-1828 between Iran and Russia, which resulted in the ceding of much of present-day Armenia to Russia. The greatest single disaster in the history of the Armenians came with the outbreak of the First World War. In 1915 the Ottoman authorities ordered the elimination of the entire Armenian population of the Empire, resulting in the deaths of around 1 million persons. The Armenian diaspora is the result of these disastrous events. Modern Armenia (eastern Armenia) gained its independence from the Russian Empire in 1918, but was incorporated in 1920 into the USSR.

13. In a national referendum on 21 September 1991, an overwhelming majority of the population supported independence, which was declared formally on 23 September 1991. Levon Ter-Petrossian, a member of the Karabagh Committee - the group which was chosen by the population to lead the democratic movement - was elected Chairman of the Parliament in August 1990 and President in October 1991.

14. Serious political tensions exist between Armenia and neighbouring Azerbaijan regarding the status of Nagorno-Karabagh, an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan. In 1988 the population of Nagorno-Karabagh voted for independence, prompting Azerbaijani authorities to repress the Armenian population of Azerbaijan, causing a massive outflow of refugees from Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan proper. The continuing Azerbaijani blockade of the railways and the energy pipeline since November 1991, and the accompanying Turkish embargo, has strangled land-locked Armenia and created a major source of tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Political structure

15. Since independence in 1991, the Republic of Armenia has been working to create a democratic, multiparty republic with presidential system of government. Legislative power belongs to the Parliament; however, the head of State is the President of the Republic. Levon Ter-Petrossian was elected President during free and fair, multicandidate elections in 1991.

16. Armenia has not yet adopted a new constitution. The 23 August 1990 Declaration on Independence serves as the basis for any future constitution, the draft of which is currently being debated in Parliament. In the meanwhile, the Parliament has set about creating a constitution by passing separate blocs of laws. Laws on the President, Parliament and property have already been passed and others are being drafted. The Declaration on Independence of Armenia also established the principle of the separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

17. The head of the executive branch is the President who is elected for five years along with the Vice-President. He is a "French-style" head of State, commander-in-chief, appoints the Prime Minister and the government, has the right of legislative initiative, signs and promulgates all laws and is responsible for the international relations of the State.

18. The Parliament is a unicameral body of 260 deputies. It is the seat of legislative power, and is responsible for ratifying treaties, confirming the nomination and removal of the Prime Minister, the members of the government and other high-ranking civil servants appointed by the President. A simple majority of the Parliament is needed to pass a vote of no confidence in the government. However, the President has no obligation to accept the vote of no confidence. The next parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place in July 1995.

19. Over 30 political parties are registered in Armenia, of which 13 are represented in Parliament. The Armenian National Movement which led Armenia to independence is the largest bloc in the Parliament with 63 deputies. Today most debate in Parliament rages around the peace negotiations regarding the conflict of Nagorno-Karabagh, the direction and pace of reforms and the adoption of a new constitution.

20. The judicial branch is divided into two levels: the Supreme Court, which is the highest judicial institution, and the district courts, located in every administrative district. The district courts try the overwhelming majority of cases. The Supreme Court also serves as final court of appeal for Armenia. The Supreme Court is comprised of 15 judges, separated into 3 sections: civil, criminal and military. New Supreme Court judges are selected by Parliament from a list of candidates presented by the President. The current Chief Justice of the Armenian Supreme Court is Dariel Parseghian. The Supreme Court must examine and approve every law before coming into force. Armenia has a codified legal system, but these codes are currently being changed.

21. Armenia has implemented several judicial reforms. A law has been passed to guarantee the independence of the judiciary. The role of the

Procurator-General has been limited in both civil and criminal cases, steps have been taken to ensure uniformity in judicial practice throughout the country, and training seminars for judges have been introduced.

22. The legal framework and structure of the judiciary will be finalized once the constitution and the law on the judiciary - both of which are currently being debated in Parliament - are adopted.

III. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Economic characteristics

23. The main branches of industry are engineering and metal fabrication, light industries, including textiles, apparel and footwear, and the food industry. Copper, aluminium and concentrates of molybdenum, lead and zinc are produced. Gold and other precious and rare metals are mined in Armenia. Tufa, pumice, basalt, granite and marble find extensive applications in the construction materials industry. Industry in Armenia is heavily dependent on raw materials, fuel and semi-finished goods imported from former Soviet republics. Therefore, the long-lasting blockade has paralysed the Republic's economy, making it impossible to import raw materials or dispatch finished products to foreign markets. The fuel and energy shortage has worsened the situation.

24. In the last three years most business and industrial enterprises have come to a standstill. Previous financial and trade relations are disrupted and the ongoing economic crisis has frustrated the establishment of new business relations, joint ventures and creation of a strong private sector. The agricultural sector, despite wide-ranging reforms including the privatization of land, is unable to meet the needs of the population. Overall, the national income of Armenia decreased by 55 per cent from 1988 to 1992.

25. In November 1993 the Armenian Government introduced the national currency, the dram. Russia's decision not to supply new rouble credits to Armenia was a determining factor in the decision to introduce the dram.

26. The Armenian Government has consistently pursued a radical economic reform programme, pushing through the privatization of agricultural land and small industrial enterprises. By the end of 1992 the privatization of land had been completed and government figures indicated that output had risen in some areas. Privatization of retail and small-scale enterprises was being pursued and by mid-1993 most retail trade was accounted for by privatized outlets. In the autumn of 1993 the Government managed to ward off opposition attempts to water down the reforms.

27. **The following are useful economic statistics:**

Inflation rate:	**20 per cent per month (1993)**
Exchange rate:	**US$ 1 = 415 drams (April 1995)**

Foreign trade balance:	US$ -98 million ($205 million imports, $107 million exports)
Net material product:	51 049 million roubles (1992)

Social and cultural characteristics

28. The condition of the population has deteriorated significantly since independence. Firstly, the number of refugees and homeless in Armenia is staggering - a result of the earthquake and the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled Azerbaijan. The blockade imposed by Azerbaijan has contributed to the difficult conditions resulting in widespread malnutrition, higher mortality rates, low birth weights, homelessness, and increased medical and psychological problems. According to the World Bank more than 90 per cent of the population live below the international poverty line. The minimum monthly wage in Armenia will buy half a pound of butter.

29. The following statistics pertain to education and health:

Elementary and secondary schools (1993/1994):	1 424
Persons in these schools:	599 100
Institutes of higher education:	14
Persons in these institutes:	58 000
Technical schools:	70
Students enrolled in technical schools:	33 600
Number of physicians:	14 600
Nurses:	36 500
Hospitals:	187
Number of beds in hospitals:	30 800
Polyclinics:	526
Literacy:	98.9 per cent of the population

IV. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS

30. In the absence of a new constitution the Declaration on Independence, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted by the Parliament in 1991) are considered the highest law of the land and provide the framework for the protection of human rights. Armenia is still relying on parts of the Soviet Constitution until the adoption of a new constitution.

31. The Declaration on Independence contains the following provision: "Respectful of international instruments on human rights and the right of self-determination ..."

32. The Parliament has ensured that all legislation conforms to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants.

The international legal instruments have supremacy over all provisions of Armenia's legislation until the complete modification of the Armenian legal codes.

33. The district courts and the Supreme Court can invoke and implement any provisions of the Conventions which have been ratified by the Parliament. The office of the Procurator-General supervises the implementation of human rights instruments by the judiciary. A committee for legal affairs exists in every city hall, and provides a forum for citizens to bring their complaints. Since the ratification of human rights instruments by Parliament, some of these committees, in collaboration with various NGOs working on human rights issues, have organized periodic public meetings where petitions are given directly to the Vice-Procurator. The Vice-Procurator explains the law in the particular case, or can decide to reopen the case if there has been any violation of the law. These public meetings are televised.

34. The Parliament has adopted various laws in the field of human rights. The law on information provides for freedom of speech and press. The 1991 law on religious organizations provides for freedom of conscience and the right to profess one's faith. The 1992 law on language guarantees minorities the right to publish and study in their native languages. The 1993 law on the handicapped guarantees the social, political and individual rights of the handicapped. The 1992 law on employment guarantees employees the right to strike and organize or join unions of their own choosing without prior authorization. A law on social and political organizations has also been passed.

35. Article 6 of the draft constitution outlines that "the State ensures the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, guarantees the right to property and inheritance, in accordance with the principles and norms of international law". The draft constitution also guarantees to all citizens without any kind of discrimination the right to life (art. 14), the right to freedom and personal inviolability (art. 15), the right to equal treatment under the law (art. 17), the right to privacy (art. 21), the right to freedom of movement (art. 22), the right of equality between men and women (art. 23), the right to property (art. 24), the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to freedom of expression (art. 26), the right to peaceful assembly (art. 27), and others.

36. All efforts are being undertaken to publicize various international human rights instruments; however, because of financial constraints, not all conventions have been translated into Armenian.

37. The Department for Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has presented a draft programme on cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. The programme requests the assistance of the Centre in drafting human rights legislation, holding seminars on human rights, translating human rights documents into Armenian as well as the establishment of a human rights centre in Armenia.